



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SANDERS: “I WILL FIGHT HARD TO KEEP MOUNT SOLEDAD NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL AS IT IS”**

### ***MAYOR RECOMMEND PURSUING STAY, APPEAL TO CITY COUNCIL***

San Diego – Vowing to implement the will of San Diego voters, who just last July voted by 76% to preserve the Mount Soledad National War Memorial, Mayor Jerry Sanders today said that he would fight hard, and do everything within his power, to preserve the Monument just as it is today.

Mayor Sanders recommended that the City seek a stay to the Judge’s ruling from the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals and that the City simultaneously pursue an appeal. The City Council will consider this issue at their meeting on Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The deadline to file the appeal is June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The transfer of the land to the National Park Service is already on appeal at the State Court level and the Mayor believes that case should be allowed to proceed. Mayor Sanders believes the City will have a good case to make to both courts.

“Some say this debate is about the cross. I could not disagree more,” commented the Mayor.

“This is not about a Christian symbol. What this boils down to is preserving a nationally registered War Memorial that is an integral part of San Diego history. The cross has been here for almost 100 years and the war memorial has been here for over 50 years. It’s part of our social and cultural fabric.

“The Mount Soledad National War Memorial is a true, multi-faceted, national war memorial designated as such by the Federal government. The courts have routinely approved secular monuments that have crosses as an element of the monument.”

Veterans of all faiths, dating back to the Civil War from all branches of the armed services are honored at the Memorial.

The City Attorney has informed the Mayor that he too will fight to implement the will of the voters. The City Attorney has not yet determined how the City will be represented on this case. A number of public interest law firms, including the Thomas More Law Center and the American Center for Law and Justice, have offered to represent the City. There is a risk that the City could lose its appeal and be forced to pay legal fees. San Diegans for the Mount Soledad National War Memorial have also offered to raise money to pay for those fees should that happen.

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